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A CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

Clergy and Churchwardens of the Diocese of Rochester

IN OCTOBER MDCCCLXXIIJ

AT HIS SECOND VISITATION

BY

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BISHOP OF ROCHESTER

London

RIVINGTONS, WATERLOO PLACE

HIGH STREET

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Cambridge

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A CHARGE

MY REVEREND BRETHREN AND

GENTLEMEN CHURCHWARDENS,

Before I enter on the various subjects which during the four years which have elapsed since my last Visitation have occupied the anxious attention of all faithful members of our Church, I desire to thank you for the answers you have made to my Visitation Questions.

It is usual, as indeed it is necessary, for a Bishop, before he visits his Diocese, to make himself acquainted with the general condition of the Parishes and Churches under his supervision, in case there be anything which calls for special notice, or the declaration of his judgment thereon. At the present crisis, it was necessary that I should ask some questions of the Clergy which were somewhat out of the ordinary routine, and endeavour to ascertain whether any of those deviations from established usage which have become common amongst us were to be found in my Diocese. One thing also I asked with regard to your teaching; I mean on the subject of Sacramental Confession; because I felt it my duty to ascertain the mind and practice of my Clergy in that matter. But none of

these things have I done, as I trust, in an unfriendly or inquisitorial spirit. In the course of my Charge, I may have to say things which may be distasteful to some of my hearers; but I have entered on my task with the most earnest desire that I may give no unnecessary pain to anyone; with a deep sense of the burden of responsibility that is laid upon me; with prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in what I shall speak; and, as I can safely affirm, with the one object only in my mind, to maintain in my Diocese, with your assistance who are my fellow-helpers, the plain teaching, the simple customs and traditions, and the sober Ritual of the Church of England.

We meet again in anxious—not to say perilous times. But every day's experience tells us that the dangers which threaten the Church of England are from within, and not from without. The uneasiness which prevails far and wide is distinctly traceable to causes which, if they continue in operation for a few years longer, must produce disruption. And there are some who say, "Let disruption come. We would rather have disruption, with whatever it may bring, than go on as we are going on." But they who thus speak are zealots. They are not men who calmly survey the work which Jesus Christ would have done in the world, and the instrumentalities which He appointed for the carrying on of that work; but who have taken their view of the Church and its accessories from a

period in its history when, the land being over-spread with darkness, they that had rule in sacred things built churches, and instituted rites and ceremonies, with intent to constrain and influence by sounds and sights, and outward representations of heavenly things, those whom for lack of ordinary knowledge and intelligence they could scarce hope to influence in any other way. The splendours of mediæval worship are the dream of men who live in an age when the restoration of such pomp and circumstance could only tend to a sickly sentimentality, such as is really fast spreading, especially among women, and gradually through their influence obtaining some hold on men also, but which, it needs no prophetic power to foretell, never will obtain a hold upon the mind and intelligence by which this world is ruled. And yet, if religion does lose its hold upon that mind and intelligence; if Christ's word to the men of His time, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," becomes lost to us through the substitution for the truth and spirituality of worship of a number of minute observances and forms, and imagery vainly representing heavenly things to carnal minds, the inevitable result is infidelity—infidelity in high quarters, infidelity in the ruling powers; among the weaker sort, superstition.

And some apprehension of this kind is part of the prevailing uneasiness; men perceiving that the simple worship of the Church of England, setting

forth sin, and the Propitiation for sin, and the power of the Spirit of God in believers, and the Resurrection of the Dead, and Eternal Judgment, is being so altered that they cannot recognize it, so dressed up and mutilated that they cannot join in it.

That these alterations arose in their first beginnings—were, in fact, a reaction—from a carelessness in Divine worship, and an irreverence in Holy things, and a neglect and defilement of Holy places, and a manner of dealing with spiritualities, which might well have drawn God's Judgments upon this nation, is most true. And while a considerable reformation has taken place and is taking place, there are still corruptions and abuses remaining uncorrected, which are also causes of the prevailing uneasiness. Since I addressed you at my last Visitation, the faith of godly men in several parishes in this Diocese has been so sorely tried by the misconduct of their spiritual Pastors, that you could scarcely have wondered if there had been a deliberate secession from the Church of those over whose loss we should have had most occasion to mourn. Again, I grieve to say that notwithstanding the signs of the times; notwithstanding that in so many parishes services are being multiplied, efforts made to revive and quicken spiritual life, to rouse and awaken the indifferent and those dead in trespasses and sins; the solemnity of Divine worship increased by a reverent carefulness in

every part of the service, there are still some where no such efforts are being made, where the Holy Communion is administered rarely; where there is no life; no zeal; alas! no fire of love, so far as we can judge by outward signs; where "Let be" is the watchword, where a protest against Ritualism and Popery satisfies the consciences of men who seem to forget that the only valid and effectual protest against error is continuance in the word of Christ, daily walking as Children of the Light, speaking often to one another of Heaven and Heavenly things. The protests of the dead in formalism and indifference are but so many encouragements of the errors that have crept in among us. For, by confession of all men, among the most advanced (as the expression is)—advanced indeed they are, for they have outstepped the order of march and are imperilling their own and others' safety—amongst the most advanced Churchmen are to be found those whose whole soul is in the work they have in hand; who are ready to spend and be spent for their work's sake. What do these men care for the protests of the indifferent and the self-seeking against what they do? They hail it as a sign that they are right; that God's blessing is with them; that if they are decried by men who mind earthly things, and give to the world, and pastimes, and domestic joys and satisfactions, the time they pledged themselves to give to prayer and the study of the Scriptures, it turns to them

for a testimony that the views they have embraced are the right views; their words words of truth and soberness and reality.

What must be the effect on an ordinary English Congregation, who have been accustomed to see the worship of God conducted in the ordinary way from their childhood upwards, who are not indifferent to Holy things; who are quite sensible of what carelessness and irreverence is, and who would really appreciate any improvement in the way of greater solemnity in Divine Service—when they see, more or less suddenly introduced, such a sight as was witnessed in a church, not in this Diocese, on last S. Peter's Day; *i.e.* three Clergymen arrayed in green vestments, all prostrating themselves upon the ground at those words, "Incarnate by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," in the Nicene Creed; who saw presently afterwards the Holy table obscured from view by clouds of incense, and other things strange and unusual, to say the least of it! Is not this sufficient of itself to startle, to disturb, to unsettle the minds of nine-tenths of the worshippers in any ordinary congregation? But those who are favourable to such views and practices will answer, that congregations ought to be educated up to this manner of service; that it did not startle or disturb the congregation in which it was done: on the contrary, they in like manner prostrated themselves; they on the same occasion remained in the Church to the end of the

Communion Service, not communicating, while the officiating Clergy, or one or two with them, communicated. We come then to the plain issue, whether this is the mind of the Church of England or no; not merely according to use (that it certainly is not), but, granting that coldness and carelessness and ignorance may have vitiated the use, whether this was what was designed to be at the Reformation, when that form of service which we still follow was settled by law. This question has been in great part decided by the authorities which bind us on all other subjects. It has been laid down by the highest Court of Appeal that such and such things are not according to the mind of the Church of England according to her accredited formularies, historically considered, with every light thrown on their construction and application which careful research made by acute and learned men could bring to bear. But it is further answered, that this is not enough. It has been argued by a Clergyman in this Diocese to me, admonishing him that some of his practices are inconsistent with his obligation to obey the law, that there is a prior law to that of this Church and Realm; that in the ancient Church such things were done; continued to be done up to the Reformation, were not expressly prohibited at the Reformation, and therefore continued virtually to be the law of the Church; and that he, doing these things, could not be justly censured by me, his Bishop, or could

not be held as offending against the law of the land. Surely this is setting up his private opinion against the law. The law has pronounced; and every Priest of the Church of England promised at his ordination so to minister the Doctrine and Sacraments and the Discipline of the Church as the Lord hath commanded, and this Church and Realm hath received the same. What authority is to settle a disputed matter concerning the Doctrine and Sacraments and Discipline of the Church, but the authority constituted in the Church and Realm for the resolution of such differences? "The parties doubting or diversely taking anything shall alway resort to the Bishop of the Diocese. He, if he be in doubt, may send them to the Archbishop. But both Bishop and Archbishop are bound by what is contained in the Prayer Book; and on the question whether that which they order be or be not contained in the Prayer Book they are subject, as all other men are, to the decisions of the law of the Realm, which the Church has received."

But there are other matters than those which come under the head of Ritual, on which it is assumed that the mind of the Church is not clear; as for instance, what that searching and examination of the conscience is which constitutes a worthy preparation for receiving the Lord's Supper?

On this subject, it seems to me, the Church has spoken so plainly that it were impossible, unless we were misled by some previous tradition or con-

ception, to err as to her meaning. "The way and means thereto is," this is the voice of the Church, "first to examine your lives and conversations by the rule of God's commandments, and whereinsoever ye shall perceive yourselves to have offended by will, word, or deed, then to bewail your own sinfulness, and to confess yourselves to Almighty God;" and further, "If there be any of you who by this means cannot quiet his own conscience, but requireth further comfort or counsel, let him go to his own Pastor, or to some other discreet and learned minister of God's Word, for absolution, for spiritual counsel and advice."

Now this second means does obviously come in to be used only upon the failure of the first, fairly tried and resorted to. The way and means to come to the Holy Communion with a full trust in God's mercy and with a quiet conscience, is, after searching our own consciences carefully, to confess oneself to Almighty God.

I would only ask any God-fearing man whether, taking God's Word for his rule, and considering wherein, since his last communion, he has transgressed any of these Holy Commandments, he can ordinarily be in doubt about sin committed, so as to require the help of a Confessor. We may not, indeed, be able to search out with great minuteness our secret faults. "Who can tell how oft he offendeth?" But if I cannot tell, can another tell me?

The thing is against reason. I may consult another, and tell him of this or that weakness which I feel, or this or that thing which I have said or done. But his judgment of my case must be founded upon that which I tell him, or upon that which he—entering upon some inquiry into which an incidental word has led him, and eagerly following up that track with questions which take their colour from the idea with which he started—has conceived in his mind: or if at length he finds himself mistaken, he must begin again at the beginning, having meanwhile suggested, say to a young and tender, or a scrupulous conscience, things which had not yet troubled it. I contend that the substitution of a fallible confessor for the Infallible Searcher of Hearts is evil and cometh of evil. I contend that the true confession, so far as the disburdening of the conscience is concerned, is to God.

“I dare boldly affirm,” saith our own Hooker, “that for many hundred years after Christ the Fathers held no such opinion [he is speaking of private confession]; they did not gather by our Saviour’s words any such necessity of seeking the Priest’s Absolution from sin by secret and (as they now term it) sacramental confession. Public confession they thought unnecessary by way of discipline (so does our own Church teach in the Communion Service), not private confession, as in the nature of a sacrament, necessary.”—Book VI., ch. iv. 6.

But there are two cases which obviously may occur, to both of which the compilers of our Liturgy, some of them with the experience of—and all of them with the experienced results before them of a system of confession to a Priest, have directed their special attention.

The first is the case of a perplexed conscience. “Let any of you who by this means—the ordinary means—cannot quiet his own conscience herein—come to me;” who cannot quiet; who requires comfort; who is so grieved for the greatness of some one sin, or the pressure of many, of a long course of sin persisted in against mercies and warnings, that he is afraid: or who requires counsel—there is some intricacy in his sin; for instance, he has married the sister of his deceased wife, or he has acquired large sums of money by trading upon another’s downfall, to which he saw him tending day by day, and did not say a word which might have saved him—’twas the man’s own fault that he was ruined—these are the sins in which it is possible that a man whose conscience is awakened may not be quite clear what he ought to do. “Put away this woman, who has borne me children! when I overcame her first scruples by my importunity—told her there was no harm in what I solicited her to do—and now put her away! I cannot unravel this knot. I will go to my Pastor—or if he seem scarce equal to the task, because he is not a thoughtful man—or he is too young—

or he is too old—I will call upon some other discreet and learned minister of God's Word to help me." Or, in the other case—"I am told that I must make restitution and satisfaction for all injuries and wrongs done by me to any other. What shall I do in this case? I grew rich by taking advantage of another's weakness. He is dead and gone: to whom shall I make restitution? To his children? He left no child. To some great charity? Will this meet the case? And what of mine own children, guiltless of my fault?" A thousand questions arise, and the more the man thinks of what has ensued upon a course of action which he entered on at first without considering what it might entail, or without, indeed, seeing at first that step by step he should enrich himself at another man's cost, or by means which seemed lawful in the way of trade, but would not stand the light of some simple word the Preacher spake one day—the more he is perplexed and amazed at the deceitfulness of sin. In such cases of a troubled conscience, the Church has clearly offered the help of a confessor. "Are we not bound with all thankfulness," saith Hooker, "to acknowledge His Infinite goodness and mercy, which hath revealed unto us the way how to rid ourselves of these mazes; the way how to shake off that yoke, which no flesh is able to bear; the way how to change most grisly horror into a comfortable apprehension of Heavenly Joy? * * * it hath therefore pleased

Almighty God, in tender commiseration over these imbecilities of men, to ordain for their spiritual and ghostly comfort consecrated persons, which by sentence of power and authority given from above, may as it were out of his very mouth ascertain timorous and doubtful minds in their own particular, ease them of all their scrupulosities, leave them settled in peace, and satisfied touching the mercy of God toward them. To use the benefit of this help for our better satisfaction in such cases is so natural that it can be forbidden to no man; but yet not so necessary that all men should be in case to need it." The help suggested by the Apostle's word, "Confess your faults one to another," is something altogether different in kind from this, and will bear no such superstructure of doctrine as some are disposed to build upon it.

There is yet another case in which the Church has not, so to speak, offered the help of a Confessor, but has required her ministers in that last, or possibly last, intercourse which they hold with a soul committed to their charge, to move a sick person to make a special confession of his sins if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter,—if, after those ordinary bewailings and confessions of sin to God, or, never having ordinarily bewailed and confessed his sins, being now in some dangerous extremity, he feels the need of that loosing which Christ committed to His Apostles

and their successors, saying, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them;" if ye remit them, *i. e.* according to My rule,—My rule of love and shame and sorrow and repentance. The man who has sent for his Pastor to tell him of his misery and his sin will joyfully accept the conditions on which a wise and faithful counsellor will assure him of the promised forgiveness, will feel the burden taken off his heart just in proportion to the depth and truth of his repentance, the earnestness and sincerity of his Faith. I appeal to those among you, my most dearly beloved Brethren and fellow-helpers in the ministry, to whom some cry for help and comfort hath come from lips long unused to prayer, who have watched God's wonderful Providential dealing with some parishioner for whose conversion you have prayed for years, till at length you were called in and consulted where you would scarce have ventured to proffer counsel; I appeal to you who have almost shared the wrestlings with Satan of some soul agonized for the past, dreading the dark future; I appeal to the old and gray-headed among you,—yea, in such matters as these wisdom is with the aged if they be found in the way of righteousness—I appeal to you here met in solemn conclave, listening indeed to my counsel as set over you in the Lord, but with whose hearts I desire that my heart should beat in perfect unison, as I speak on matters where the clear truth of the

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Gospel is liable to be obscured by doctrines and traditions of men,—I appeal to you to unite your testimony to mine against the practice which is growing up amongst us, of teaching young children at the time of their Confirmation, before their first Communion, not simply to search their ways by God's Word and to confess their youthful sins to Him, but to call in that help which they cannot yet have felt the want of. I appeal to you, Gentlemen Churchwardens, representing as you do the Laity in your respective parishes—I appeal to you as to wise men, capable of judging in such a matter as this—not, indeed, to go against your Minister in this or any other thing if he follow a course different from that which I have laid down, but to represent to him (if the case require it) that the Bishop of the Diocese has spoken with authority in the matter of habitual confession prescribed as a rule, and that you feel (if you do so feel) that he has rightly spoken.

God forbid that I should by any word I speak diminish the respect that is due to the Minister of God's Word, or bring his teaching into contempt. But the times are critical; the danger is great; we are on the very brink of a convulsion, if young men newly ordained preach, as they are preaching, Sacramental Confession, and set up to be directors of consciences, without experience, without wisdom and discretion, without that self-control which he who would guide souls lost in the mazes of sin,

perplexed with doubts, must needs have first attained, lest indeed the blind lead the blind and both fall into the ditch.

Nor can I think it expedient that we should adopt the remedy which has been suggested as a means of guarding against this evil, *i. e.* the selection of certain persons in a Diocese, or in the Church at large, to whom this difficult and delicate task should be entrusted. Not to speak of serious practical difficulties in the way, it would encourage persons of morbid temperament to seek the proffered help. It would be an admission of the principle of habitual confession to an extent not contemplated by the Church of England. I speak to you as one who has had no inconsiderable experience for many years among a large body of parishioners of the middle and lower classes, of such cases as ordinarily arise in the ordinary temptations and trials of life. I am convinced that for persons in that class of life the best adviser is their own Parish Priest, who is best acquainted with their surroundings, who knows more than any stranger could possibly know of the nature and strength of the temptations to which they are exposed. The pressure of the present need (if there be any pressure) is probably in that upper stratum of society, which is heaving, alas! with the excitement of many unprofitable and vain contentions about holy things. Women especially, following uncertain guides, have over-

eagerly taken up this question, and seem as though they scarce considered themselves safe without the direction of a confessor. This habit of mind is in direct opposition to the rule of the Church. It is placing the last resort first; it is substituting the exception for the rule. If confession to a Priest became the rule, there can be no doubt that the manliness of the English character would shortly be affected by it, especially that frankness and openness which is so observable and so admirable in our best educated young men; which makes their keenest competitions without envy,—which keeps them in a wholesome contempt of what is mean and base and dishonourable; which is the real nobility of those among them who have kept themselves free from the temptations of their youth; to which in no small degree it is to be attributed that our English homes are what they have been, and what God grant they long may be, abodes of honour and love within, centres of kindliness and generous sympathy to the neighbourhood around. That which really threatens these homes, that which may gradually weaken the manliness of character of which I have spoken, is the daily increasing luxury and selfishness and avarice or greed of the age in which we live; a certain base pursuit of money with a view to the delights which money can purchase, and this in conversation flimsily concealed under a light manner of talking and conventional phrases. But what is our

defence against such dangers as these ? Is it that the mothers of our young men, themselves under the influence of some more or less learned and discreet confessor, should endeavour to place their sons and daughters under his direction ? Why that would weaken the bond of filial love itself. It would interpose that which God did never design to interpose between parent and child. It would spoil the confidence of youthful friendship. It would sap self-respect. It would sow the seeds of reserve in the heart at that very age when unsuspiciousness and openness is natural, and so would stunt the whole moral growth. Our true and only defence against all this growing evil is in God's sure Word ; in the searching of one's conscience by that Word, taught and inculcated from our very childhood as our first duty ; in the habit of communion with God ever present ; in the sense of a Mediator between us and a Being so great, so pure, so Holy ; in the strength and ever-present help of an Indwelling Spirit.

Another innovation with regard to the partaking of the Holy Communion which has quite lately assumed some considerable proportion in teaching and practice is the supposed necessity of fasting Communion. There being no trace of any such rule or precept in our Service-book is almost in itself a proof that no such necessity was ever taught or intended to be taught ; that no such bar or hindrance was ever designed to be placed in the way of

those whom by most urgent invitation we invite, if we see them negligent, to come to the Holy Table. The hours of celebration must almost necessarily vary with climate, with custom of life, with distance from the church, with circumstances of occupation at home, matters quite external to Ecclesiastical rule and ordinance. To say that there is a rule of fasting to which all these must be subservient, would be hard, even if we saw it clearly in Scripture, or in the reason of the thing, or in ancient usage, or in our own formularies, that the Holy Communion must be so received. But being that there is no rule in Scripture, no reason of the thing which would not seem to be founded on some gross and carnal conception concerning the Sacred Elements; no ancient usage sufficiently extensive to bear such a rule deduced from it, and not a trace of such rule in our own formularies, the imposition of it upon consciences is arbitrary and tyrannical. That there is something in partaking of the most solemn ordinance of our religion early in the morning before the cares of the day have begun, before the ordinary conversation of the morning has turned away our thoughts from Him whom we have just sought in prayer, is most true. Personally I would always, if I could, partake of the Lord's Supper in the early morning before I broke my fast. Of evening communion, which is the use of some sixty Churches in the Diocese, and in fifteen others has been tried once or twice, I have great

doubt. But to conceive a limitation which should exclude from communion in half the country villages in this land, many a pious man and woman who can with difficulty reach the place of worship by the midday service, can only come, it is to be feared, from a theory which is growing and spreading among some, that it is sufficient to be present at the celebration of those Holy Mysteries without communicating. These eccentricities are but parts of a system intended by degrees to be introduced, or re-introduced, among us. And I count it my most sacred duty to discourage as far as I can—I would fain check by authority if I were able—such deviations from received custom and usage.

Since my last Visitation, a question which had given rise to great doubt and perplexity in many minds, concerning the Doctrine of the Real Presence, came to an issue in the decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, in the case of Mr. Bennett, of Frome. Following the precedent established in other cases, the Judges pronounced, with manifest doubt and reluctance, on the side of toleration, and declared that what seemed to be on the verge of a dangerous heresy was reconcilable with the true and received theory of the presence of Christ in the Sacrament. I do not deem it necessary, nay, I think it undesirable to enter into this matter. My own nature recoils from the discussion afresh of a subject which never could

be designed to be made the matter of subtil argumentation.

Whatever implies the lawfulness of the adoration of the material substances of bread and wine after consecration, is contrary to the mind and spirit of the Church of England in her formularies; and those who are tempted to impute to the maintainers of this opinion, that they are blind, and cannot see into the life of things, will do well to examine more carefully the ground on which they stand.

I fear that in not a few cases the Holy Communion is administered where there are less than three persons present to communicate with the Priest, in disregard of the plain injunction of the Rubric, that this shall not be done, even though there be but twenty persons in the parish of discretion to receive the Communion. On this subject the rule is as clear as it is stringent. Our Reformers absolutely prohibited the celebration of the Holy Communion by the Priest, unless there were with him a sufficient number to constitute a Communion—unless the Holy Mystery by the very circumstances of its ministration set forth not only our Redemption by Christ's Death, but also the love that we ought to have among ourselves one to another, by a partaking together of the sign of that most precious Death and Passion. The arguments by which it is endeavoured to be shown that the act of the Priest is beneficial for us, though we do not partake with him, are in plain

contradiction of the rule of the Church. Indeed, some are not afraid to profess openly that "Mass is said twice and thrice a day," affecting in their speech the mode of that Church, from which to dis sever themselves as regards this thing especially, our forefathers wrought so manfully, and strove even unto death against what they felt to be a dishonour to the truth. Nay, it would seem as though some wished a Re-reformation; a going back to something which we formerly abjured.

But this disobedience to the Church's rule is found in some who, though they would entirely agree in what I have just said, yet themselves disregard other rubrics as plain. For instance, "when there is a Communion, the Priest shall *then*, i. e. after the offertory — *then* place upon the Table so much Bread and Wine as he shall think sufficient." It is not so done, in rather more than half the churches in the Diocese. But in these things the observance of a rule is the way of order and peace. Deviations from a rule are sure to be a stumbling-block to the weak, if not a perplexity to godly and religious persons. And while I am on this subject, I feel bound to speak of one point of order and regularity in the administration of the Lord's Supper. It is ordered that the Minister, when he delivers the bread or the cup to anyone, shall say the words appointed. Some, for very charity, when there are many communicants; and some, because they think that a

repetition of the words would diminish their own or others' fervour in that solemnity—say the words once to all who can kneel at the rail at one time; and this, I am sorry to say, in some churches, where there are scarcely ever twenty communicants, and where there can be no plea on account of weariness. There are 104 churches in the Diocese where words are not said thus to each communicant singly; in 39 of which, however, the words are said to no more than two communicants at a time. I earnestly hope the practice may not grow. If the number of communicants be ordinarily so great as to render the individual administration irksome, it is surely possible to increase the opportunities of receiving; on great festivals to have an early as well as a mid-day celebration. As regards the repetition of the words, I have rarely found, in administering the rite of Confirmation daily, and often twice a day for two months together, that the repetition of the words of prayer and blessing over every candidate has abated my own fervour; and I have had frequent proofs that the comfort of that personal blessing is felt by the young persons on whom I have laid my hands. One by one baptized and received into the Congregation of Christ's flock; one by one sealed with the Spirit of promise; one by one strengthened and refreshed with spiritual food and sustenance in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, they go forth to bear every one his own burden;

to endure every one in his own person the hardness which the soldiers of Christ are taught to expect; everyone to encounter personally and individually the sin that does most easily beset him. And I am sure that a principle underlies these directed modes of administering the ordinances of the Church; and that the claim on the part of her members that these directions should be strictly followed is a claim which we, who are their servants for Christ's sake, cannot justly disallow.

I noticed in the returns made to me, that in one parish where the minister said the words of administration singly to each communicant, the parishioners had requested that he would discontinue this mode. They were impatient probably of the length of the service. I think our first duty in such a case would be to explain carefully the grounds upon which the rule of the Church is based: to point out that we ought not to grudge to Him who has given us all things richly to enjoy, that portion of our time which is allotted to His worship and service; that we who spend so many hours in seeking our own pleasure and speaking our own words, should do well to remember the benediction declared to them that dwell in God's House, and are always praising Him; and moreover to state that in these matters we have a rule to follow, and are not at liberty to depart from it.

I believe that though the times are difficult and

critical, yet in almost every case consultation with the Churchwardens and some of the heads of the parish about any change that may be contemplated in the service; about the schools; about the application of monies collected at the offertory; about the various branches of parochial organization which are now matters of deep personal interest to many—will have its full reward in the unity and good understanding between the Minister and his flock; whereas if that is omitted, and a Clergyman introduces changes on his own responsibility, or seems to shut out the people from their due share in the management of the parish, discontent is always felt, and will show itself upon occasion. It was because by the confession of all men the time was come when not only must the Clergy come to a better understanding one with another, but also when the Laity should begin to take a more active part in our counsels than hitherto, that I proposed at my last Visitation Conferences; whereat all needful reforms should be considered and men's minds ascertained concerning the changes which might become necessary in the now altered position of the Church. And notwithstanding some little hesitation, for I can scarcely call it opposition, which manifested itself at first, I believe that the principle of Diocesan Conferences is now being generally admitted; *viz.* that it is necessary for men to meet together and become informed of one another's views and feel-

ings in the present state of affairs, with a view to united action.

The first matter to which the Conference that was held at Stratford in 1870 directed its attention was the great question of religious Education. It was just when the measure which had recently become law demanded an extraordinary effort on the part of those who wished to preserve the denominational system intact. And it was mainly through the presence of the Laity at that Conference that the effort to maintain religious Education in this Diocese was so successful. A committee of the Conference was appointed to consider the whole subject. A sum of 10,000*l.* was collected for the building and enlargement of schools. That sum, nobly assisted by a grant of 5000*l.* from the National Society, and further help from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, was carefully apportioned by the Committee, and went far towards enabling us to meet the requirements of the Act.

The great change that was made in the system of State Education was simply this; first, that no child should be forced to attend the Scriptural reading or religious lesson if its parents disapprove; and secondly, that the State Inspector should not inquire as before into the religious knowledge and attainment of the scholars.

Subject to this, with some alteration in details, we educate as before in our Church Schools. But

this carries with it a consequence, that the schoolmaster has no object to serve in endeavouring to perfect the children of the school in religious knowledge, as in other subjects. His reward; his position as a schoolmaster is independent of the success of the school in that respect. But God forbid that I should depreciate the work of a pious schoolmaster. He may do much still. How much of the whole tone of the school must depend on the spirit of his teaching; on the frame of mind and heart in which he daily approaches his work. And I have the comfort and satisfaction of knowing that any fears which might have been entertained on this subject have hitherto proved to be groundless. But no doubt it rests with you, my Reverend Brethren, and you will not shrink from the responsibility, to see that children are trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It will be your duty henceforth to take care that your absence from your parish for needful recreation and rest shall be regulated as far as possible by the time when you can best be spared from the vigilant superintendence of your school. From henceforth your special work and labour of love in obedience to your Lord's command, "Feed my Lambs," will be to guard against the possible secularization of your school, by giving every help and encouragement in your power to the schoolmaster in his arduous task. From henceforth the ancient rule of the Church that all parents, masters, and dames

should cause their children, servants, and apprentices, to come to the church at the time appointed to be instructed in some part of their Christian faith and duty, will assume new importance in your eyes. From henceforth you will feel that the simple faith of the children in your parish is in your hands to guard and keep safe from the prevailing errors of the time, that when they go forth into the world to get their livelihood in other places or in countries far from home, they may go fortified by the Scriptural teaching they received when they were under your care. Henceforth none of those whom I ordain to the ministry shall say to me, "We are in a lonely country parish, where there is no society, and we know not how to pass our time." For scarcely with all diligence; scarcely with most careful preparation for teaching in the school, for catechizing in the church, shall they be able to feel that they have done their part, their difficult but blessed part, in impressing on those tender hearts the great truth that they have a Father, a Saviour, a Comforter in Heaven.

For the inspection of schools in religious knowledge, which became doubly necessary when the State Inspector ceased to have to do with that department of instruction, the Rev. G. W. Fisher has been appointed by me on the nomination of the Rochester and Herts Boards of Education, as Diocesan Inspector in the Archdeaconries of Rochester and St. Albans, while in Essex the

religious inspection of schools is carried on as before by a body of clergymen who kindly undertake that work in their own neighbourhood or some district agreed on.

I have before me the results of both these systems of inspection; and it is competent for me to say that they are earnest, systematic, thorough: they prove satisfactorily that the religious instruction of children has not as yet suffered from the change of system that has taken place; and that there is no reason why it should suffer; that it is in our own hands to make it even more efficient than it has ever yet been. It is gratifying to hear that so far from the visit of the Diocesan Inspector being regarded with indifference—as some feared that it might be—it is on the contrary looked forward to with interest by the schoolmasters and mistresses and the managers of the school. It is indeed greatly to be regretted that the visit of the Inspector has been declined in Essex in as many as thirty-two parishes; in Kent and Hertfordshire by twenty; but in many cases the ground assigned for this refusal was that the schools were not yet ready for inspection, but would be open to it at a future time. I earnestly hope that those who have declined to receive my Inspector on any other ground will reconsider their decision. There is and can be only one object of this inspection of Schools. It is to perfect that which we all wish to see perfected.

It is to profit by one another's experience ; to learn from one's own or another's failure or success ; to be enabled to see where we are weak that we may strengthen ourselves in that part. Through the careful inspection of all the schools in a Diocese many things are ascertained which it is important for the whole community to know. For instance, great stress has been laid on the necessity for introducing a conscience clause ; or the hardship of compelling parents to send their children to a school when they conscientiously disapprove of the religious teaching. Those who were best acquainted with the working of our parochial schools were well assured that this grievance was greatly exaggerated ; and so it has proved. The number of children formally withdrawn from religious instruction on this account is almost infinitesimal. To that very small number, however, we must add in all fairness those who came too late for the religious lesson ; which appears in many cases to be done designedly that they may avoid it. On this account it becomes a question whether it would not be better that the religious teaching should be given at another time ; say at the end rather than at the beginning of school. " It would then," as Mr. Fisher observes in his report to me, " be clearly understood that all the children who had been present at the secular instruction would remain for the religious instruction unless their parents made formal application for the contrary." There is

certainly something very unsatisfactory and positively injurious in a permitted irregularity of this kind. But whenever the religious instruction may be given (and that must depend on the varying circumstances of parishes, the convenience of the Clergy, or of the families who are so often the ready assistants of the Clergy in this matter) it is certain that the time devoted to this subject ought not to be stinted, that everything should be done which can be done to impress on the minds of children that those who love them and care for them have a special interest in this part of their work. No time, my Reverend Brethren, which you bestow in the administration of your parishes will be so rewarded in a seen and felt benefit conferred upon those to whose service you have pledged your lives, as the time spent in teaching in the school, or in preparing and assisting the pupil teachers for the part they must take in the religious instruction of the younger children. There is one unvarying testimony from every State Inspector, and every Diocesan Inspector with whom I have ever conversed, that a tone of order and reverence is to be observed in those schools where the Clergy aid regularly and systematically. Nor can we over-estimate the relief afforded to the schoolmaster, on whom devolves daily these six hours' work in school, and one hour's secular instruction to his pupil teacher afterwards, to feel that the whole burden of that which he

knows to be the most responsible part of his office, does not rest on him alone. It arises both out of my conference with the Essex Diocesan Inspectors and out of Mr. Fisher's report, that I should suggest that special attention be paid to the childrens' private prayers, to be used at home. Not but that this important point is attended to in many schools: out of 171 school departments examined in Hertfordshire, 119 are favourably reported of in this respect, but that it is the very principle of dependence on God, and faith in God, and recognition of God's presence with us in all we think and do and say, which if we can instil into the hearts of children while they are under education in our schools, we shall have given them that which shall stand them in good stead when all earthly knowledge shall have vanished away.

Another subject discussed at the Stratford Conference was, "Fees payable by churchwardens." A committee was nominated by the Conference, who, after careful consideration, made a report. The result at which the committee arrived was in effect this: that, as there are no means in many parishes for the payment of these fees, and as it is not to be expected that the officials of the Church who were paid by those fees would work without reward (for that the labourer is worthy of his hire), the only remedy in our hands was that hereafter the whole Ecclesiastical arrangements, as they now stand, should be remodelled; that the Archdeacons'

Visitations should cease, and only the triennial, or quadriennial, or as it is in some Dioceses, the septennial Visitation of the Bishop, remain; meanwhile, that the admission of the Churchwardens and other necessary formalities should be transacted at another time and place. This report was submitted by me, at the desire of the Council of Conference which met to consider these reports at Danbury, to the Archbishop, and has been more than once referred to by his Grace at meetings held for the consideration of this difficult subject; difficult because vested interests are involved, which in all legislation in this country are carefully guarded. In the Act for the Abolition of Church-rates alone were these interests not sufficiently protected, but left to be maintained as they could. It seems to me a principle of honour and equity not to let the present holders of official positions, or rather those who held them at the time of the passing of the Act, lose what they had been used to calculate upon for their maintenance, so long as they perform the services to which certain fees and emoluments were attached. I cannot see with what justice their claim can be ignored; nor can I feel the least sympathy with the man who says, "Let them get it as they can. I for one will never pay it." Yet this kind of speaking is apt to be received with applause. On the other side, it is most unjust that the churchwardens should be compelled to pay such fees out of their own pockets. It is a

matter for parishes to consider, so long as those vested interests remain. It is a matter for those to whom power is given by law to adjust these fees, to take in hand.

To get rid of the difficulties which beset this question of fees by the abolition of the Visitation of the Archdeacon, would be a course attended with great loss and inconvenience to the Church. The Archdeacon lightens the burden of the Episcopate to an extent which is not perhaps easily understood by those without. I am myself in constant communication with each of the three Archdeacons of this Diocese : who by reason that they are brought into personal contact, every year, with the newly-elected or re-elected churchwardens, and that it is their duty to visit churches; to inquire into the manner of their sustentation; to satisfy themselves that all is well duly ordered in them,—are necessarily well acquainted with many things which might not otherwise come under the notice of the Bishop; and by the jurisdiction which they hold over church officers and servants do greatly assist in the peace and well governing of our parishes. Not then to abolish their Courts and diminish their influence, just when it specially pertains to their office to help in the working out of recent enactments, such as the Ecclesiastical Dilapidations Act, the Incumbents' Resignation Act, the Union of Benefices Act, and others,—but to strengthen their hands as the persons best qualified to watch

over the interests of the Clergy, would seem to be the wisest course.

Brethren, there can be no doubt that the Clergy and the faithful Laity have set their faces steadfastly towards supplying the spiritual needs of our parishes. Since my last Visitation I have consecrated twenty-five new churches: and I have the satisfaction of knowing that one hundred and fifty have been either restored or rebuilt, or internally improved and re-fitted, during the same period. Nor is it merely that by these buildings and rebuildings of churches a larger number of worshippers are enabled to attend, and do attend, Divine Service; but wherever this work has been taken in hand, the love that men have shown toward the house of their God and the offices thereof has borne fruit—some thirty, some sixty, some an hundred fold. I have seen with pleasure, whenever I have been present at the consecration or re-opening of these churches, how all things within correspond to the outward restoration or adornment of the fabric. No longer that appearance of slovenliness and neglect which we remember in past years—no longer that irreverence in the handling of holy things, which has passed away let us hope for ever. The earnestness of both minister and people in the service in which they are engaged—the joyful interest—the solemn and devout manner, without any modishness or affectation, of those who know and believe that God is greatly to be feared

in the assembly of His saints, and to be had in reverence of those that are round about Him—these are the signs by which we judge that the restoration of the sanctuaries in our land is a work which God hath graciously accepted at our hands. Nor is this all. Almost on every occasion of this kind, my brethren have made known to me some pious layman without whose willing aid the work could never have been begun, much less carried through: some women rich in good works, who help continually in the service, in the school, among the poor. The testimony of St. Paul concerning Phebe, that servant of the Church which was at Cenchrea, is not confined, God be praised for it, to that age and generation. Many and many of my brethren have said to me of such, almost in the very words of St. Paul, “She hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.”

Brethren, there is a matter which is very near my heart, and which, while I am speaking of the restoration of churches, I cannot forbear naming to you. It is the restoration of our ancient Cathedral. The Dean and Chapter have lately taken this work in hand. But having spent 12,000*l.*, and finding as much yet to be done, they are unable to proceed for want of means. In asking you to help them, I do not ask you anything new or unusual. The Cathedrals of Bangor, Carlisle, Chichester, Chester, Ely, Exeter, Gloucester, Hereford, Llandaff, Lichfield, Oxford, and Worcester, have all, within

these few years, been restored or are in process of restoration. Surely there is no reason why we should not do what is done in other counties. We have inherited from those who built those walls and caused holy ministries to be kept up within them, and Christian teaching to be maintained around them, our faith, our Christian privileges, the peace and safety we enjoy, the hopes which lie beyond this present peace and safety. We cannot dissociate ourselves from the first founders of Cathedrals, Parish Churches, Colleges, and Schools. We have entered into their labours. I ask you earnestly to help. Within the borders of this Diocese dwell hundreds of persons whom God hath so blessed with temporal prosperity, that if they were so minded they might take this work in hand and finish it. I do not plead for a dead work. As much as any practical work that can be named, this would tend, like those other restorations of which I have spoken, to promote the worship and praise of God. For are not our Cathedrals, after centuries of almost disuse, just now beginning to be made instrumental in the great revival of religion which the Spirit of God is bringing to pass amongst us?

But of all restorations that of our ancient Abbey Church of St. Albans, so lately rescued by energetic effort timely made from dilapidation which might have laid it in ruins, gives us most cause for joy: not only for the grandeur of its proportions, the memories of the past that are connected

with it; its having been the scene of the first English martyrdom; the witness it bears to the zeal and love of our forefathers towards the House of their God—but also because we cannot forbear to connect its restoration with the hope of its being made, possibly within the lifetime of some of us, the seat of another Bishopric. I ask your careful consideration of the words of the Commissioners appointed by Parliament in the year 1858, to inquire into the state of the four Dioceses lying within and around the Metropolis:—"We may mention among the duties which attach to the Episcopal office, Ordination, Consecration of Churches and Burial Grounds, Confirmation, Visitation, and intercourse with the Clergy by letters and personal interviews, attendance at the House of Lords, and at public boards and meetings connected with the Church, together with a general care and superintendence of many religious societies and institutions. According to the circumstances of each see, these duties are more or less frequent and pressing, and they now demand for their proper fulfilment a much greater expenditure of time and labour than heretofore, since the presence and counsel of the Bishop are more frequently required in consequence of the increasing efforts now made in every direction for the advancement of religion and education and for the general benefit of the people."

If such was the case fifteen years ago, it is ten-

fold more the case now. The population of the Diocese of Rochester in the time of my predecessor was somewhat over 600,000. It is now more than a million : and if the feeling should revive in the county of Herts which prompted many noblemen and gentlemen at that time to recommend to the Commissioners the propriety of founding a Bishop's see at St. Albans, and offering on their part to contribute liberally towards restoring the Abbey to a state and condition fit for a Cathedral Church, it could scarcely be that such a proposal, with the present feeling of Churchmen concerning the increase of the Episcopate, would entirely fall to the ground as that former proposal did. But whether that be so or no, I trust the feeling of veneration and love for that ancient Abbey which was called forth by the danger of its downfall, will not die away till the disgrace and defilement of the public footpath which passes through its midst is removed : till the restoration of the Lady Chapel, which the ladies of Hertfordshire have taken in hand, is effected ; and the security at least of the roof and walls of that magnificent Nave against what is still imminent, is accomplished. This cannot be done without further and increased subscriptions. I deem it my duty not to omit the present opportunity of bringing the subject before the minds of the Churchmen in my Diocese, who have ever shown themselves willing to help where they are satisfied that the need is real, and that it

pertains to God's worship and service. But it would be useless to conceal from you that the present scale of subscriptions has proved quite inadequate. I cannot think that this great and wealthy nation will leave this work unfinished in the midst.

Nor is it only in the building and restoring of churches that the zeal of the Clergy and of the faithful Laity for the salvation of souls has manifested itself. Applications are made to me continually to license schoolrooms wherein the Word may be preached to parishioners living too far from the parish church. Iron churches have been erected in several parishes for the same reason. Mission halls in our populous districts in the suburbs of London have answered the two-fold purpose of religious instruction and of innocent recreation. And how could all this machinery have been set on foot, unless there had been men, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, content to dwell in those quarters with no other aim or object than to teach and preach Jesus Christ? There is a district in the parish of West Ham, known now as the parish of Holy Trinity, Barking, bordering on Canning-Town, where the name of ANDREW DELAP will be remembered with affection and respect, as long as any of those to whom he ministered can call to mind, as I do now, his unwearying labour, his godly simplicity in Christ. But for such men—but for their truth and their humility, but for their being content to know nothing

among the people committed to their charge but Jesus Christ and Him Crucified—how should the woes and hardships of this weary life ever be softened to those on whom they press most heavily? None can tell but those who have experienced it, the comfort of that one word, “Peace be to this house,” uttered by him who crosses the threshold with that word upon his lips. Such a comforter was that man of whom I have spoken.

To send forth such men, with lay-helpers to assist them—scripture readers—parochial mission and bible women—to provide churches, mission stations, schools, parsonage houses, where they, dwelling in the midst of the people to whom they are sent, may go in and out among them daily, preaching the Word—this is the work of what is called “The Bishop of Rochester’s Fund,” which is now entering upon its fourth year. Upwards of 30,000*l.* has been paid or promised, of which 26,423*l.* has been actually received. The whole cost of raising and administering the fund has been 413*l.* 13*s.*, or about 1*l.* 8*s.* per cent. Of the money received, 5124*l.* 15*s.* has been the result of Collections in upwards of 600 Churches in the Diocese. There are still some few Churches which have not contributed to this great Home Mission work. The expenditure at the present time on the most important branch of the work, *viz.* living agencies, is about 3200*l.* a year. This goes to support ten missionary Clergy, ten parochial

curates, besides scripture readers and mission women : two mission districts have received their endowment ; and it is hoped that two more will soon be self-supporting also. Grants amounting to 4500*l.* have been made to eight churches which will accommodate 5000 worshippers : 690*l.* has been given towards schools or mission churches : 1000*l.* towards four parsonages : five sites have been purchased for different objects at a cost of 1875*l.* : and schools for 7000 children have been aided by grants amounting to 6766*l.* Of these all but two are completed. With regard to the present resources of the Fund, it must be said that the available balance is insufficient for the continuance of the present grants to living agents ; many of the larger contributions, spread over a term of years, will shortly expire ; and unless their place be supplied by fresh subscriptions, much of the work must necessarily be given up. May we not take example from the munificent gift of 500,000*l.* to the Church of Scotland ? The donor has been moved to give this sum (it is thus recited in the Trust Deed) “ because he feels deeply impressed with the extent to which spiritual destitution prevails among the poor and working population of Scotland, and is satisfied that this proceeds in a great measure *from the want of properly organized and endowed territorial work* ; that there is a tendency to a departure from the truth, and to an exclusion of religion from the teaching

of the young, and that the means available by law are insufficient to provide for the faithful preaching of the Word of God, for the refutation of error, and for the support of the Church, and for Education, and other purposes of a religious character." It may be needful that I should make another appeal, not to the deaneries of Barking, Greenwich, and Woolwich only, as is done every year, but to the whole Diocese. For as Churchmen we must regard the unity of the body, and not those local divisions which so much influence united action; as men say, "It is a county matter, and must be taken up by the county." We should say, "It is a Church matter, and should be taken up by the Church." Or may I not venture to say, "Ye are Christ's, and this is Christ's flock, whereof some of the members are weak, some are strong; and the strong must help the weak; and the weak and the strong together must learn in whom their strength lies." Lately, when we set ourselves in earnest to the task of building and enlarging the schools in the Diocese, we learnt something of the advantage of working together in a body. I think we found that the best heads in the Diocese could consult for the advantage of each locality better than those in the locality could have consulted for themselves. I think the true strength of unity was perceptible in that effort. Every one knew what to do: the time was saved that must have been lost in seeking

information from the Educational Department in London, overburdened at that time with work, and not disposed, from the circumstances of the case, to lend itself to our needs, beyond that which it was bound to perform. And, besides all this, there was the sense of working together. It was not Essex, Hertfordshire, and Kent; but it was the Diocese. It was a matter of Religion. The ordinary political differences were unfelt. And if Nonconformists had only been actuated by the same spirit (for they were really bound by their own traditions to maintain religious as opposed to secular Education), there was a hope for once of being united in the great cause which both we and they have at heart. But that one word "unsectarian" led them astray. They thought they were contending for religious freedom, when they were delivering themselves and us into the hands of the common enemy. And so that hope passed away: and it seems as though we were never to unite together but in some such strictly neutral ground as that which is called Hospital Sunday. I hope that in the course of another year when I come to ask you to contribute once more, and finally, to the Bishop of Rochester's Fund for the three London deaneries, in which only in all the Diocese the population has largely outgrown the ancient Ecclesiastical provision, I shall find you in a readiness to help me, as you readily helped me four years ago. I say when I shall appeal to you

finally, for this reason, that in the course of three years, or four at most from the expiration of the first five years from its commencement, that Fund ought to have answered its end in the establishment of new parishes, each with its proper parochial machinery, and with the power of subdividing itself hereafter with the aid of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

It has been a custom in this Diocese for twelve or thirteen years past that the Bishop should at the beginning of the year ask the Clergy to devote the Offertory twice in the year—once to some object at home, once to some object abroad. I have done this every year: last year I named the National Society, which in 1871 gave 5000*l.* for the building and enlarging of schools in this Diocese. The sum collected was 800*l.*, but this came from under 200 parishes; not one-third: the remaining two-thirds took no notice of my request. This year I named the Additional Curates and the Pastoral Aid Societies; the former of which has made grants within two years to thirty-two parishes, amounting to 1655*l.* The sum collected has been 583*l.* for the Additional Curates; 136*l.* for the Church Pastoral Aid Society; from under 200 Parishes, probably the same parishes which contributed 800*l.* in last year. The remaining two-thirds took no notice of my request.

I know, my Brethren, that this is not out of any indisposition to help forward good works, but

simply and solely from your unwillingness to put before poor people the duty of giving. One thing, I think, admits of no dispute, that it is not sincere to urge the poverty of the parishioners as a reason for not asking them to give, when in fact at every celebration of the Holy Communion the plate is handed to the poor in common with the rich. The words of blessedness sound as sweetly in their ears, as they sound in the ears of the rich, "God loveth a cheerful giver." Another argument has been used to me against these collections which I almost shrink from mentioning. It is that people will not give, when they know that the money is to go out of the parish. It is an argument which does not consist with the support that is freely given to our Missionary Societies in every parish in this land; among whose joyful supporters from the very beginning have been the poorest members of our Church. I venture once more to suggest that there should be an Offertory from the whole Congregation once a month, not from the Communicants only. This is a matter in which you, Gentlemen Churchwardens, if you only throw yourselves into it heartily, might greatly assist your Ministers, who are unwilling of themselves to make any change of this sort.

While I am on the subject of Home needs and Home missions, I am bound to mention to the promoters of such good works, as an instance of a special need, the St. Andrew's Waterside Mission.

This was a Mission (the word has now become a familiar word) set on foot to afford spiritual aid to emigrant and other ships leaving these shores while they lay yet in the Thames; in which are often to be found persons setting forth with little thought for any other provision than that of things needful for the body. Ten years ago the Rev. Canon Robinson, then Incumbent of Holy Trinity, Gravesend, saw that if a clergyman, located where he then was, went on board these ships, to offer service on the Lord's Day, a word of exhortation on any other day, good books for the voyage, Bibles and Prayer Books, to those emigrants, sailors, or others going forth to distant lands, it might be the means, under God's blessing, of putting good thoughts into their hearts, sowing seed which might bear fruit in after-life, and cast bright beams of Gospel light over their departure from the land of their birth. He with great care and diligence established that Mission. It is now carried on by one who shared his labours and has since succeeded him as Vicar of Holy Trinity, the Rev. John Scarth. Last year he distributed about one thousand pounds' worth of books; more than twelve hundred volumes were sent to him for the purpose, besides thousands of magazines and tracts. He bears witness to a great change for the better in the religious feelings of both officers and men; and has many of the former acting as lay missionaries on board ship, the

Mission supplying them with books for service and for distribution. I had some thought of proposing that the Offertories at some places near the river, at which I held my Visitation, should be devoted to the support of this Mission; but the Hockerill Training College for schoolmistresses, to which in Essex and Herts we owe so much, and my Fund in the London deaneries, seemed to have a stronger claim. But it is my intention and my earnest hope that I may be permitted to further in some way that great and good work on the river Thames. Like other good works it has had its great discouragements and difficulties. But as the consecration of the little church on the river side has given it a local habitation; a place where prayer shall ever be made for the souls of those whom it strives to benefit, and for those who are engaged in its holy ministrations, there is good reason to hope that it shall have support from the Diocese in which it stands, when its first founders and we who wish it God speed shall be gathered to our rest.

I do not forget, while I am addressing myself in general to the Parochial Clergy, that I have other fellow-labourers, who feel, and often keenly feel, the same perplexities which trouble us in our ministrations; and who have likewise to contend with other difficulties peculiar to themselves. In this Diocese, as much as or more than in any other, are great military centres. Provision

is made by the State for services. The chaplains to the forces, under the general superintendence of the chief Chaplain, minister to the members of our Church. Nor is there lacking zeal among military laymen to help forward God's work among British soldiers. But one of the chief drawbacks in the position of an army chaplain is this, that while he has as much need or more of the sympathy of his brethren than the Parish Priest has, he has less opportunity of conference with men like-minded, engaged in the same work. He ministers to men, the greatest part of whom are severed from their home ties, and who through that severance and the absence of the ordinary domestic influences, and often through the company into which they are thrown, are exposed to a fiercer fire of temptation. He has to deal with tempers chafed by the necessary strictness of military discipline, and the hardness they have to endure. He has to watch for opportunities when the word in season, kindly spoken, may be the very turning point between the fear of God and the strength of temptation. And this too when the times both for public worship and private conference are rendered more difficult because of other ministrations. I have often feared lest it should seem to my Brethren the chaplains to the forces that they are in any way overlooked or neglected. Of their feelings towards their Bishop I have full proof in the kind and considerate

welcome I have always met with when I have gone to minister in the Camp. And if any changes should occur—as no man can tell in these days what changes may not occur—detrimental to their office and to the interests of true religion, they may rest assured that the Bishop and Clergy of the Diocese in which their lot is cast will hold out to them the right hand of fellowship, and regard their interests as their own. Like words may be spoken to those who labour in our gaols and workhouses and infirmaries. In this assembly are represented very various offices, degrees, and dignities in the Church; and I will venture to say that in no age of the world was the esteem in which every one was held more entirely measured by his fruitfulness and diligence in the work to which God has called him, than the age in which we live. Whoever does his duty honestly, remembering his stewardship; whoever approves himself, in difficult and trying places, as the Minister of Christ; whoever sustains the Clerical character by his bearing and deportment as he mixes with the world in which his mission lies—though indeed it be a very little thing that he should be judged of men and of man's judgment—yet is by that judgment and by the sympathy of his brethren supported, cheered, and comforted in his task.

The sympathy of many members of our Church with persons holding Latitudinarian opinions, though not with the opinions themselves, led to

frequent and prolonged discussions, both in the Ritual Commission and in both Houses of Convocation, on the expediency of retaining the Athanasian Creed in the services of the Church. It must be borne in mind that the expediency of retaining it after its established use for 300 years is a very different matter from the original question of its adoption into the Service. No one can doubt that to have made its use optional, or to have diminished the frequency, or to have expunged it altogether, would have been a slur cast, whether on an Ancient Confession of Faith, or, as some have been anxious to regard it, on an exposition of a Confession, or, as others, upon an Hymn sung in honour of the Eternal Trinity. And it was this feeling which led to the decision pronounced by the Clergy wherever they were consulted on the subject, adverse to any change. It was this feeling so general among the Laity, notwithstanding the signatures of many hundreds or thousands to a document expressing an opposite opinion, which has justified the action of Convocation in retaining the use of the Creed. Relief has been afforded to some by a Declaration put forth by that body, affirming what I do not see how any could have doubted, *viz.* that we are to bear in mind when we utter those strong condemnations, that we are not condemning those who have not been duly instructed concerning this holy mystery, or any who do not in truth come

under the sentence pronounced by the Lord Himself, "He that believeth not shall be damned." And now this question which agitated so many minds, and led to so many hard words and so many lamentable misunderstandings, is for the present set at rest. Nor do I believe that, except in a comparatively small number of instances, the Athanasian Creed has been so great a stumbling-block as has been represented, either in the way of members of our own Church or of our Nonconformist Brethren, as hindering them from joining our Communion. It is a grievous thing to put a stumbling-block in a brother's way: but it is a weakness surely to be ready to risk Holy Truth and the wounding of pure minds and consciences for the sake of quieting and appeasing an unhealthy sensitiveness. In such matters we can only commend ourselves to God; respect what we have received to hold; do nothing lightly; and rest assured that He will guide His Church aright in the end through the conflict of opinions and the strife of tongues.

I advert to the subject of the Public Worship Facilities bill, which was rejected by the House of Lords, for the sake of reminding you, my Reverend Brethren, that the bill which appeared to give power which might have been abused, to the Bishop, was not of the Bishops' seeking; was submitted to their consideration by the framer of it, and after very great hesitation accepted

by them, with the full consciousness that they should expose themselves to misunderstanding, but with the strong conviction that they had no right to refuse that responsibility, because the power might in many parishes, with great consent of the parishioners, have been used for good. The charge that we were either seeking power, or over eager to accept it when offered, was not borne out by the facts. I can only assure you that in certain cases of neglected duty, of souls left to perish for lack of spiritual care—cases in which, if I submitted them to your consideration at this moment, you would say, “Take the power, do what you can,” I stand powerless to interfere. Whether for some phantom fear of giving more power to the Bishop those cases ought to be left untouched, those souls left unholpen, those pastors left to do as they will, contrary to the feeling of the best of the parishioners, is a question in which it cannot be absolutely demonstrated which is the right course to pursue. But there is a busy, bustling suspiciousness which, taking advantage of the semblance of a sinister motive, may sometimes decry unfairly and dissuade unwisely, and rather seem to be than be truly on the side of justice and truth.

I have confirmed, since the year 1868, 50,000 persons: in the present year 8255; of whom 3417 were males; 4838 females. In the notices I have issued of my intention to confirm, I have hitherto

left the age at which children should be presented to the Bishop to the discretion of the Clergy. But inasmuch as some of my Reverend Brethren have interpreted this discretion more widely than I intended, and have presented children of nine or ten years of age to be confirmed, I am compelled to limit the age to somewhat over fourteen years; nor will I confirm any child under fourteen unless on special application made to me in the particular case. I regret to be obliged to adopt this course, because there is a great difference between children in regard to the age at which their religious impressions become deeper and more distinct.

The first year after Confirmation, provided that young persons are brought to be confirmed at an age when they are capable of discernment between the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, and the law of sin and death, is often the turning-point of their Christian deportment and behaviour. If they never communicate; or if they communicate once or twice, and then slacken and leave off, they gradually fall into the world's ways. And it is here, above all other opportunities, that of mortal sickness not excepted, where the unremitting care and vigilance and tenderness of a Pastor is sure of its reward. It is not, as we know, in preparing candidates for confirmation, but in guarding them from falling into temptation and a snare afterwards that our time and diligence are required. The increased frequency of confirmations, which began,

we may almost say, during the vigorous administration of the Diocese of Oxford by him whose loss to the Church, to his Diocese, to his friends and brethren, has not even yet begun to be felt as it will be felt—has done much to bring the reality of that holy rite home to men's hearts. For we must not measure the advantage of more frequent confirmation by the numbers confirmed. There is all the difference between the resort of young people from a country village to a neighbouring town, amidst all the circumstances of a holiday, to be confirmed in a strange church, and their quietly going up to their parish church and there in the presence of their kinsfolk and near acquaintance taking their Baptismal promise on themselves. The Episcopate must be considerably increased ere this be possible in our larger Dioceses. It is in itself a strong argument for the subdivision of Dioceses; for the subdivision of Parishes; for everything which helps forward that individual ministration to individual souls to which I have before referred as the end of our conversation and ministry; till St. Paul's words to Barnabas, "Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do," be more a reality than they can be now: and we can feel ourselves, in the discharge of our office, as some of you, my Brethren, who have the charge of small parishes, have the happiness of feeling yourselves personally instru-

mental, by God's grace, in bringing men one by one to the knowledge of the truth.

I think it is some feeling of this kind (for God speaks to us "*πολυμέρως και πολοτρόπως*," in many portions and in divers manners, in the economy of grace) which has stirred the hearts of many of His servants in these days to undertake the work of Missionary Priests, Missioners as they are called. It is the feeling that the individual application of the Word to the individual conscience was being lost in the endeavour to work upon men congregated in masses, by the aid of this marvellous pulpit eloquence which in our Home Church has never attracted multitudes together as it does now. The vast congregations in our cathedrals and larger churches, assembling regularly, and yet lacking that enforcement of the word which the Parish Priest in his daily visitation brings with him as it were to the souls committed to his cure and governance—suggested to spiritual minds something which this manner of ministration failed to supply. That this movement may be overruled for good; that it may not run into any strange excitement, nor degenerate into rigorism, but may be restrained within the bounds of sober-mindedness and an holy moderation, ought to be the prayer of us all, and the earnest effort of those who shall be led either by their office and position in the Church, or by the guidance of the Holy Ghost, to take part in it.

The multiplication of these efforts to bring the blessed truths of the Gospel home to the hearts of our people—by these Missions, by Services at the Holy seasons; by the appointment of lay readers to conduct services in schoolrooms, and rooms hired for the purpose; by the help of scripture readers and mission women in large parishes; and all this followed up, as it always ought to be, by a closer Pastoral Visitation—is surely to be reckoned by us a reviving of God's work in the midst of the years. And truly we need to see the tokens of the working of God's Spirit among us; for there is enough to alarm us in the loosing of the bonds that hold society together; in the growing independence of children; in the disrespect to superiors; in the increase of wealth and the luxurious enjoyment of that which wealth can purchase, side by side with deep poverty and suffering; in the growth of discontent consequent upon this; and while this is going on around, in the distracted state of the Church; for it is nothing less than distraction, when in so many parishes we may truly say that men set up their ensigns for signs; almost point to the vestments they wear, and ask, "Who is on the Lord's side, Who?" Bishops are accused of always expressing their disapproval on one side. In what I say now I certainly intend no side. I intend to express my strongest disapproval of party spirit on any or either side; that party spirit which is fanned into a flame by the religious newspapers

of the day. Such is the bitterness of party publications, that it is impossible for any man to read them and not be defiled by the spirit which they breathe. Just as the general public contracts its spirit of indifferentism from the indifferentism with which religious questions are too often treated in secular publications, so is the mind of the religious public inflamed by the sarcastic and uncharitable tone which pervades some of those publications, alas! on both sides. Surely hard words are no test of spirituality: surely self-seekings and standings apart, “ἐπιθῆναι, διχοστασίαι,” are not indications of zeal for the truth! One can conceive in the midst of the unprofitable and vain contentions that are rife amongst us a man or a woman of a sorrowful spirit, who longs for Gospel comfort, saying and feeling, “I care not about these disputes: oh! that I might have my request: that God would grant me the thing that I long for, that He would carry me somewhither into the wilderness; that He would take me away from these cavillings and evil surmisings ‘to where beyond these voices there is peace!’” And it is certain that there are souls in this very distress! It is time, whether we profess ourselves Protestants, or whether we rejoice in the name of Anglicans, that we did consider poor people who have no heart for these distinctions; to whom the strongest words we can utter against Popery, the strongest sarcasm we can level against Puritanism, is no

more than sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Can it be supposed that when we are thus puffed up one against another Satan doth not use his opportunity to sow the seed of unbelief in men's hearts? Is it not certain that the true reason why Spiritual Religion is not progressing among us, as, with all the efforts that are being made on every side to promote it, it might have been expected to progress, is this, that even carnal and worldly-minded men perceive clearly that true religion cannot consist with these wearisome contests; for that where envying and rivalry is, there wisdom cannot be. For she is the breath of the Power of God; and a pure Influence from the Glory of the Almighty; the brightness of the everlasting Light; the unspotted mirror of the Power of God; and the Image, the reflected Image, of His goodness, which in all ages entering into holy souls, maketh them friends of God.

I impute it far more to these vain contentions and to their most unsettling diversity of practices in the Church than to causes which have lately been insinuated—that we have lost, if we have in any degree lost, the affections of the labouring classes of the people. In the first place I do not believe that we have lost them. It were a grievous thing indeed, if, dwelling in the midst of them as we do, sympathizing as we do in their joys and sorrows, their trials and sufferings—ministering spiritual comfort to them at those times when souls are

drawn most nearly together in the bonds of the Gospel—if with all the motives to brotherly kindness and love which the relation in which we stand to them can supply, and with the superadded sense of our responsibility toward them as pastors, stewards of the Heavenly mysteries, dividers of the word of God—I say if with all these great advantages we have lost the hearts of the people of England, it would almost stand to reason that we had been unfaithful to our trust, that we were unprofitable servants! I do not for one moment believe that it is so. I believe the hearts of the English people are stedfastly attached to the Church of their forefathers. And let Rome attempt to put forth a hand against her, it will be found that they are so. Let Nonconformity, which is far more congenial to their minds and religious aspirations than Rome, succeed in disturbing the present settlement by vote in the House of Representatives, which no doubt does represent the true feeling of the country on great political questions, but does not entirely represent it in what pertains to God and the conscience—and it will be seen whether the English people are attached to their Church or no.

I do not anticipate Disestablishment: but I do fear Disruption. I greatly fear it. I cannot think that we can go on long, provoking one another, envying one another in spiritual things, which are very near the nation's heart; for this nation is a deeply

religious nation. If my feeble voice could touch the heart of a man who thinks that to minister in almost sacrificial pomp with lights and incense and sounds that have a charm for the educated, but have none for the unlearned; (yes: it is not these outward things that attract the poor, but the devotion, the love, the self-denial of those that use them)—or the heart of a man who counts it a glory to preach in a black gown: I say if my voice could touch such men as these, I would say, For God's sake—for Souls' sake—for the Church's sake—for the Truth's sake, lay not these Holy ministrations to which God has called you open to the assaults of infidelity by laying stress on such things as these. It is the woe of calling evil good, and good evil; of putting darkness for light, and light for darkness; of putting bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter: disguise it from yourselves as you will, it is the woe of being wise in your own eyes, and prudent in your own conceits!

There is now open before the Church of England as grand a calling as was ever open before God's Church in any land; to wield the weapons of Faith against immorality; against infidelity; against self-seeking in every kind; against that which is called by a feigned name, Communism—which is another name for the worst of all selfishness.

If you, my Brethren, are true to your Heavenly calling, faithful to your Ordination vows, loving fellow-helpers to God's people committed to your

charge, every separate parish will be a fortress, but not an isolated fortress, against these enemies of all righteousness. If we are vainglorious, seeking our own glory; if we are lovers of pre-eminence, contending always for our own side or party; if we, who are dead with Christ to the rudiments of the world, turn again to its weak and beggarly elements, to be in bondage to them, then indeed will the Enemy come in like a flood, but the Spirit of the Lord will not raise up a standard against him!

NOTE A.

The answers I have received concerning the administration of the Lord's Supper, show that in 402 parishes it is celebrated monthly; in 105 bimonthly; in 91 weekly; in some, it is vaguely said, two or three times a week; in 2, daily; in 8, four times; in 10, six times; in 32 from 8 to 11 times in the year. Since my last Visitation, the bimonthly communions have increased from 80 to 105; the weekly from 50 to 91 — while there has been a corresponding decrease in the number of parishes where it is more rarely administered. There has been a celebration of the Holy Communion on Ascension Day in 240 churches. The number of parishes where the church is open for daily prayer has increased from 31 to 73: for service on Holy Days, other than the Great Festivals, from 117 to 258; on Ascension Day from 450 to 561.

NOTE B.

HOCKERILL TRAINING INSTITUTION FOR SCHOOLMISTRESSES.

91 schoolmistresses, trained in this Institution, are now working in schools in Essex and Herts—179 in other counties. Accommodation is provided for 60 students, all of whom are resident within the building. The annual expenditure is 2700*l.*, of which sum 1900*l.* is paid by the Government Grant, 120*l.* by the students themselves, 80*l.* by children in the practising schools, leaving 600*l.* a year to be raised by subscriptions and donations. There are 70 clerical, 119 lay subscribers—whose united subscriptions produce about 500*l.* a year; leaving a deficiency of 100*l.* a year. I earnestly hope the Laymen now present and any others whom these words may reach will consider whether among other claims on their bounty in the neighbourhood where they dwell, and where the schools are dependent on local exertions, they might not support the Diocesan Training Institution at Hockerill, which has sent

forth in the 20 years that have elapsed since its foundation, 450 schoolmistresses, of whom 280 are now, generally with great success and approbation, employed in schools.

NOTE C.

DIOCESAN CHURCH ENDOWMENT FUND.

This Fund was founded by my predecessor Bishop Wigram, for the purpose of aiding livings under 200*l.* a year, by grants not exceeding 200*l.*, to be met by private contributions to the same amount, conditionally upon the same being met by the Ecclesiastical Commission, or Queen Anne's Bounty. Owing to the stringency of the terms, the grants during the last four years have not exceeded 3500*l.*, and a sum of 7800*l.* still remains out of 14,500*l.*, or thereabouts, originally subscribed.





